

HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL 5

48TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - SECOND SESSION, 2008

INTRODUCED BY

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A JOINT MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE NEW MEXICO CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION TO INTRODUCE
LEGISLATION TO AWARD THE CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL TO BATAAN
VETERANS.

WHEREAS, beginning December 8, 1941, in the critical early
hours of World War II, the 200th coast artillery of the New
Mexico national guard was in the first line of defense in the
United States commonwealth territory of the Philippines against
the attack launched by Japanese forces immediately after
Japan's December 7, 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii; and

WHEREAS, during the 1941 Japanese invasion of the
Philippines, the 200th coast artillery of the New Mexico
national guard stood between the invading Japanese forces and
the freedom of the American and Filipino peoples; and

WHEREAS, the 200th coast artillery was the first to fire

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1 upon Japanese forces and the last to put down their rifles when
2 ordered to surrender on April 9, 1942; and

3 WHEREAS, before being ordered to surrender, the men of
4 the 200th coast artillery made a valiant stand in the face of
5 terrible odds, while suffering through months of enemy attack
6 with outmoded equipment; a scarcity of food, medicine and
7 ammunition; and diseases such as malaria, dysentery and
8 beriberi that ravaged them to utter exhaustion; and

9 WHEREAS, the men of the 200th coast artillery were
10 captured by Japanese forces on April 9, 1942 and, in an already
11 starved, exhausted and sickened state, they had to endure the
12 infamous Bataan death march, during which Japanese soldiers
13 forced the men of the 200th coast artillery to march for six
14 long days in scorching tropical heat while starving and
15 brutalizing the men along the way; and

16 WHEREAS, the courageous men of the 200th coast artillery
17 endured four years in prisoner of war camps, where they were
18 forced into slave labor and lost scores of their ranks to
19 starvation, disease and brutality; and

20 WHEREAS, the men who returned home contributed
21 immeasurably to the country's growth as members of the
22 "greatest generation"; and

23 WHEREAS, the 200th coast artillery received four
24 presidential unit citations and the Philippine presidential
25 citation for their valorous defense of the American and

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1 Filipino peoples; and

2 WHEREAS, the congressional gold medal is considered the
3 nation's highest civilian award and the most distinguished
4 award given by the United States congress to citizens who
5 represent the best characteristics of the American people;

6 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE
7 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the members of the New Mexico
8 congressional delegation be requested to introduce legislation
9 to award the congressional gold medal to the men of the 200th
10 coast artillery of the New Mexico national guard; and

11 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
12 transmitted to the members of the New Mexico congressional
13 delegation and to Governor Richardson.